



M U C H A D O

11763 P.P.P. 54

A B O U T

N O T H I N G.

By Mr. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



L O N D O N :

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M D C C X X X I V .

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Dramatis Personæ.

DON PEDRO *Prince of Arragon.*

Leonato, *Governor of Messina.*

Don John, *Bastard-Brother to Don Pedro.*

Claudio, *a young Lord of Florence, Favorite to Don Pedro.*

Benedick, *a young Lord of Padua, favour'd likewise by Don Pedro.*

Balthasar, *Servant to Don Pedro.*

Antonio, *Brother to Leonato.*

Borachio, *Confident to Don John.*

Conrade, *Friend to Borachio.*

Dogberry, } *two foolish Officers.*
Verges, }

Innogen, *Wife to Leonato.*

Hero, *Daughter to Leonato and Innogen.*

Beatrice, *Neice to Leonato.*

Margaret, } *two Gentlewomen attending on Hero.*
Ursula, }

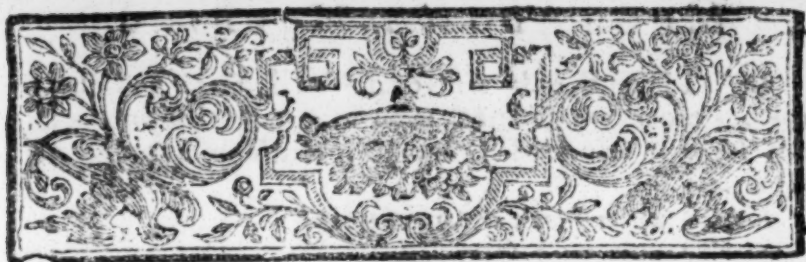
*A Friar, Messenger, Watch, Town-Clerk, Sexton,
and Attendants.*

SCENE *Messina.*

The Story from Ariosto, Orl. Fur. l. 5.



Much



Much Ado *about* Nothing.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

A Court before Leonato's House.

*Enter Leonato, Innogen, Hero and Beatrice with
a Messenger.*

L E O N A T O.



Learn in this letter, that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to *Messina*.

Mess. He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice it self, when the achiever brings home full numbers; I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young *Florentine*, call'd *Claudio*.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro: he hath born himself beyond the promise of his age, going in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better better'd expectation, than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in *Messina* will be very much glad of it.

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Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not shew it self modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness; there are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd; how much better is it to weep at joy, than to joy at weeping?

Beat. I pray you, is Signior *Montanto* return'd from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, Lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, neice?

Hero. My cousin means Signior *Benedick* of *Padua*.

Mess. O he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in *Messina*, and challeng'd *Cupid* at the sight; and my uncle's fool reading the challenge, subscrib'd for *Cupid*, and challeng'd him at the bird-belt. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? but how many hath he kill'd? for indeed I promise to eat all of his killing.

Leon. 'Faith, neice, you tax Signior *Benedick* too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, Lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victuals, and he hath help to eat it; he's a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, Lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady? but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stuf with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so indeed, he is no less than a stuf man: but for the stuffing well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, Sir, mistake my neice; there is a kind of merry war, betwixt Signior *Benedick* and her; they never meet, but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat

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Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one: So that, if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse, for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? he hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is it possible?

Beat. Very easily possible; he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, Lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No; if he were I would burn my study. But I pray you who is his companion? is there no young squarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble *Claudio*.

Beat. O lord, he will hang upon him like a disease; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble *Claudio*, if he have caught the *Benedick*, it will cost him a thousand pound ere it be cur'd.

Mess. I will hold friends with you Lady.

Beat. Do good friend.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, neice.

Beat. No, not 'till a hot *January*.

Mess. Don *Pedro* is approach'd.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar and Don John.

Pedro. Good Signior *Leonato*, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge most willingly: I think this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, that you ask'd her?

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Leon. Signior *Benedick*, no, for then were you a child.

Pedro. You have it full *Benedick*, you may guess by this what you are, being a man: truly the lady fathers her self; be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior *Leonato* be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all *Messina*, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior *Benedick*, no body marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady *Disdain*! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible *disdain* should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signior *Benedick*? courtesy it self must convert to *disdain*, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat; but it is certain I am lov'd of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind, so some gentlemen or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, if 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well you are a rare parrot teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer; but keep your way a God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old.

Pedro. This is the sum of all: *Leonato*, Signior *Claudio*, and Signior *Benedick*; my dear friend *Leonato* hath invited you all; I tell him we shall stay here

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at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. Let me bid you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince your brother; I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you, I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand *Leonato*, we will go together.

[*Exeunt all but Benedick and Claudio.*]

Claud. *Benedick*, didst thou note the daughter of Signior *Leonato*?

Bene. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I pry'thee speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why i'faith methinks she is too low for an high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise; only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou think'st I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into; but speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting jack, to tell us *Cupid* is a good hare-finder, and *Vulcan* a rare carpenter? come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that I ever look'd on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter; there's her cousin, if she were not possessed with such a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty,

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as the first of *May* doth the last of *December*: but I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust my self, though I had sworn the contrary, if *Hero* would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this, in faith? hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion? shall I never see a batchelor of threescore again? go to i'faith, if thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away *Sundays*: look Don *Pedro* is return'd to seek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro and Don John.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you follow'd not to *Leonato's* house?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count *Claudio*, I cannot be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance, he is in love; with whom? now that is your Grace's part: mark how short his answer is, with *Hero*, *Leonato's* short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord, it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but indeed, God forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her, for the Lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my Lord.

Pedro. By my troth I speak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my Lord. I speak mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretick in the despite of beauty.

Claud.

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Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me; because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a batchelor.

Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind *Cupid*.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and call'd *Adam*.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try; in time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible *Benedick* bear it, pluck off the bull's-horns, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vile'y painted; and in such great letters as they write, *Here is good Horse to hire*, let them signifie under my sign, *Here you may see Benedick the marry'd man*.

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou would'st be horn-mad.

Pedro. Nay, if *Cupid* hath not spent all his quiver in *Venice*, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours; in the mean time, good Signior *Benedick*, repair to *Leonato's*, commend me to him, and tel him I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an ambassage, and so I commit you,

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Claud. To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it.

Pedro. The sixth of *July*, your loving friend, *Benedick*.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not; the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My Liege, your highness now may do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how, And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath *Leonato* any son, my lord?

Pedro. No child but *Hero*, she's his only heir: Dost thou affect her, *Claudio*?

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant; in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young *Hero* is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words:
If thou dost love fair *Hero*, cherish it,
And I'll break with her: was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twilt so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have sav'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?

The fairest grant is the necessity;
Look what will serve, is fit; 'tis once thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night,
I will assume thy part in some disguise,

And

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And tell fair *Hero* I am *Claudio*,
 And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
 And take her hearing prisoner with the force
 And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
 Then after to her father will I break,
 And the conclusion is, she shall be thine:
 In practice let us put it presently. [Exeunt.]

Re-enter Leonato and Antonio.

Leon. How now brother, where is my cousin your son? hath he provided this musick?

Ant. He is very busy about it; but brother, I can tell you news that you yet dream'd not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them, but they have a good cover; they show well outward. The Prince and Count *Claudio*, walking in a thick pleached alley in my orchard, were thus over-heard by a man of mine: the Prince discover'd to *Claudio* that he lov'd my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and if he found her accordant, meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow. I will send for him, and question him your self.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream, 'till it appear it self: but I will acquaint my daughter with all, that she may be the better prepared for answer, if peradventure this be true; go you and tell her of it: cousins, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend, go you with me and I will use your skill; good cousin have a care this busie time. [Exeunt.]

Enter Don John and Conrade.

Conr. What the good year my lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Conr. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Conr. If not a present remedy, yet a patient satisfaction. *John.*

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John. I wonder that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under *Saturn*) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief: I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsie, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Conr. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this, 'till you may do it without controlement; you have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take roor, but by the fair weather that you make your self; it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be deny'd but I am a plain-dealing villain; I am trusted with a muzzel, and enfranchis'd with a clog, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I will make all use of it, for I use it only.
Who comes here? what news, *Borachio*?

Enter Borachio.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the Prince, your Brother is royally entertain'd by *Leonato*, and I can give yon intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? what is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite *Claudio*?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper Squire; and who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora.

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Bora. Marry on *Hero*, the daughter and heir of *Leonato*.

John. A very forward *March* chick! How come you to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoking in a musty room, comes me the Prince and *Claudio* hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo *Hero* for himself, and having obtain'd her, give her to Count *Claudio*.

John. Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure: that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, I bless my self every way; you are both sure, and will assist me?

Conr. To the death, my lord!

John. Let us to the great supper, their cheer is the greater that I am subdu'd; would the cook were of my mind: shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship. [Exeunt.]



ACT II. SCENE I.

Leonato's House.

Enter *Leonato*, *Antonio*, *Innogen*, *Hero*, *Beatrice*,
Margaret and *Ursula*.

LEONATO.



AS not Count *John* here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks!
I can never see him, but I am heart-burn'd
an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy Dis-
position.

Beat.

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Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and *Benedick*; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tatling.

Leon. Then half Signior *Benedick's* tongue in Count *John's* mouth, and half Count *John's* melancholy in Signior *Benedick's* face——

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and mony enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good-will.

Leon. By my troth, neice, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith she's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst, I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, God sends a curst cow short horns, but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in wool-len.

Leon. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? he that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth, is not fit for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: therefore I will even take six pence in earnest of the bearherd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into he'l.

Beat. No, but to the gate, and there will the devil meet me like an old cuckold, with his horns on his head, and say, get you to heaven, *Beatrice*, get you to heav'n, here's no place for you maids: so deliver I up my apes, and away to *St. Peter*, for the heav'ns; he shews me where the batchelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant.

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Ant. Well neice, I trust you will be rul'd by your father. [To *Hero*.

Beat. Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curtsie, and say, as it please you; but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsie, and say, father, as it pleases me.

Leon. Well neice, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth; would it not grieve a woman to be overmaster'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of way-ward marle? no, uncle, I'll none; *Adam's* sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you; if the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the musick, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time; if the Prince be too importunate, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the Answer; for hear me. *Hero*, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is a *Scotch* jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a *Scotch* jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and anchentry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, 'till he sinks into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by day-light.

Leon. The revellers are entring, brother; make good room.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, and others in Masquerade.

Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero.

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Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend the lute should be like the case.

Pedro. My visor is *Philemon's* roof, within the house is *Jove*.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one?

Marg. I say my Prayers aloud.

Bene. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer.

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done: answer clerk.

Balth. No more words, the clerk is answer'd.

Ursu. I know you well enough, you are Signior *Ansonio*.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Ursu. I know you by the wagling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Ursu. You could never do him so ill, well, unless you were the very man: here's his dry hand up and down; you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Ursu. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? can virtue hide it self? go to, mum, you are he; graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales; well, this was Signior *Benedick* that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

Beat.

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Beat. Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleaseth men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him; I am sure he is in the fleet, I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, he'll but break a comparison or two on me, which peradventure not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing sav'd, for the fool will eat no supper that night. We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [Exeunt.]

Musick for the Dance.

John. Sure my brother is amorous on *Hero*, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it: the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is *Claudio*, I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior *Benedick*?

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love; he is enamour'd on *Hero*, I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth; you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come let us to the banquet.

[Exeunt *John* and *Bora*.]

Claud. Thus answer I in name of *Benedick*,
But hear this ill news with the ears of *Claudio*.

'Tis certain so, the prince wooes for himself.

Friendship is constant in all other things,

Save in the office and affairs of love;

Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues,

Let every eye negotiate for it self,

And

18 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

And trust no agent; beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not, Farewel then, *Hero!*

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Ye the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business,
Count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about
your neck, like an Usurer's chain? or under your arm,
like a Lieutenant's scarf? you must wear it one way, for
the Prince hath got your *Hero.*

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why that's spoken like an honest drover; so they
sell bullocks: but did you think the Prince would have
served you thus?

Claud. I pray you leave me.

Bene. Hold now you strike like the blind man; 'twas the
boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [Exit.

Bene. Alas poor hurt fowle, now will he creep into
fedges. But that my lady *Beatrice* should know me, and
not know me! the Prince's fool! ha: it may be I go un-
der that title, because I am merry; yea, but so I am apt to
do my self wrong: I am not so reputed. It is the base
(tho' bitter) disposition of *Beatrice*, that puts the word into
her person, and so gives me out; well, I'll be reveng'd as
I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now Signior, where's the Count? did you see
him?

Bene. Troth my lord, I have play'd the part of lady
Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a
warren. I told him (and I think, told him true) that your
Grace had got the will of this young lady, and I offer'd him
my company to a willow tree, either to make him a gar-
land, as being forsaken, or to bind him a rod, as being
worthy to be whipt.

Pedro.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 19

Pedro. To be whipt! what's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy, who being over-joy'd with finding a bird's nest, shews it his companion, and he steals it,

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust, a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestow'd on you, who (as I take it) have stol'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The lady *Beatrice* hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danc'd with her, told her she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O she misus'd me past the indurance of a block; an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have answer'd her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her; she told me, not thinking I had been my self, that I was the Prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; hudling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me; she speaks Ponyards, and every word stabs; if her breath were as terrible as terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the North-Star; I would not marry her, though she were indow'd with all that *Adam* had left him before he transgress'd; she would have made *Hercules* have turn'd spit, yea and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you shall find her the infernal *Atè* in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Leonato and Hero.

Ped. Look here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now

to

Pedro.

20 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

to the *Antipodes* that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the farthest inch of *Asia*; bring you the length of *Prestor John's* foot; fetch you a hair off the great *Cham's* beard; do you any ambassage to the pigmies, rather than hold three words conference with this harpy; you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, Sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure this Lady's tongue. [Exit.

Pedro. Come Lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior *Benedick*.

Beat. Indeed my Lord, he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for a single one; marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

Pedro. You have put him down, Lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools: I have brought Count *Claudio*, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why how now Count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my Lord.

Ped. How then? sick?

Claud. Neither, my Lord.

Beat. The Count is neither sad, nor sick nor merry, nor well; but civil Count, civil as an orange, and something of a jealous complexion.

Pedro. I'faith Lady I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here *Claudio*, I have wooed in thy name, and fair *Hero* is won; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

Beat. Speak Count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 21

but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours; I give away my self for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak Cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

Pedro. In faith Lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea my Lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care; my cousin tells him in his ear that he is in my heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd, I may sit in a corner, and cry heigh ho for a husband.

Pedro. Lady *Beatrice*, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, Lady?

Beat. No, my Lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your Grace is too costly to wear every day: but I beseech your Grace pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for out of question you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No sure my Lord, my mother cry'd; but then there was a star danc'd, and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy.

Leon. Neice, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle: by your Grace's pardon. [Exit *Beatrice*.]

Pedro. By my troth a pleasant spirited Lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my Lord; she is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dream'd of unhappiness, and wak'd her self with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O by no means, she mocks all her wooers out of suit. *Pedro.*

22 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Pedro. She were an excellent wife for *Benedick*.

Leon. O Lord, my Lord, if they were but a week marry'd they would talk themselves mad.

Pedro. Count *Claudio*, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To morrow, my Lord; time goes on crutches, 'till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not 'till *Monday*, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but I warrant thee *Claudio*, the time shall not go dully by us; I will in the *Interim* undertake one of *Hercules's* labours, which is to bring Signior *Benedick* and the Lady *Beatrice* into a mountain of affection the one with the other; I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My Lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I my Lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle *Hero*?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my Lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And *Benedick* is not the unhopefullest husband that I know: thus far I can praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approv'd valour, and confirm'd honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with *Benedick*; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on *Benedick*, that in despite of his quick wit, and his queasie stomach, he shall fall in love with *Beatrice*: if we can do this, *Cupid* is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only Love-Gods; go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [Exeunt.

Enter Don John and Borachio.

John. It is so, the Count *Claudio* shall marry the Daughter of *Leonato*.

Bora. Yea my Lord, but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me; I am sick in displeasure to him, and

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 23

and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross his marriage?

Bora. Not honestly my Lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me,

John. Shew me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of *Margaret*, the waiting-gentlewoman to *Hero*.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her Lady's chamber window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lyes in you to temper; go you to the Prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wrong'd his honour in marrying the renown'd *Claudio*, (whose estimation you do mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as *Hero*.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough, to misuse the Prince, to vex *Claudio*, to undo *Hero*, and kill *Leonato*; look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go then find me a meet hour, to draw on *Pedro*, and the Count *Claudio*, alone; tell them that you know *Hero* loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and *Claudio*, as in a love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid, that you have discover'd thus; they will hardly believe this without tryal: offer them instances which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber window, hear me call *Margaret*, *Hero*; hear *Margaret* term me *Berachio*, and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter, that *Hero* shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truths of *Hero*'s disloyalty, that
jealousie

24 MUCH ADO about NOTHING.

jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice: be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora, Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [Exeunt.

Leonato's Garden.

Enter Benedick and a Boy.

Bene. Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber widow lies a book, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, Sir.

[Exit Boy.

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence, and here again. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will after he hath laugh'd at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love! and such a man is *Claudio*. I have known when there was no musick with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the taber and the pipe: I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile a-foot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turn'd orthographer, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell, I think not. I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, 'till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool: one woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well. But 'till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her: fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 25

near me; noble, or not for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the Prince and Monsieur Love: I will hide me in the arbour.

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio and Balthazar.

Pedro. Come, shall we hear this musick?

Claud. Yea, my good lord; how still the evening is,

As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony.

Pedro. See you where *Benedick* hath hid himself?

Claud. O very well, my lord; the musick ended, We'll fit the kid-fox with a penny-worth.

Pedro. Come *Balthazar*, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice To slander musick any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency, To put a strange face on his own perfection; I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.*

The SONG.

*Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,*

Oze

* ———— woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing, Since many a wooer doth commence his suit To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos, Yet will he swear he loves.

Pedro. Nay, pray thee come. Or if thou wilt hold longer argument, Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes, There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Pedro. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks, Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now divine air; now is his soul ravish'd! is it not strange, that sheeps guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

The song, &c

B

24 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

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MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 25

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The song, &c

B

26 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never,
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into hey nony, nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The frauds of men were ever so,
Since summer first was leafy:
Then sigh not so, &c.

Pedro. By my troth a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

Pedro. Ha, no; no faith; thou sing'st well enough
for a shift.

Bene. If he had been a Dog that should have howl'd
thus they would have hang'd him, and I pray God
his bad voice bode no mischief; I had as lief have
heard the night-raven, come what plague could have
come after it.

Pedro. Yea marry, dost thou hear *Balthazar*? I pray
thee get us some excellent musick; for to-morrow
we would have it at the lady *Hero's* chamber win-
dow.

Balth. The best I can, my lord. [Exit *Balthazar*.]

Pedro. Do so: farewell. Come hither *Leonato*;
what was it you told me of to-day, that your niece
Beatrice was in love with Signior *Benedick*?

Claud. O ay, stalk on; stalk on, the fowl fits. I
did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful, that
she should so doat on Signior *Benedick*, whom she
hath in all outward behaviours seem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't possible, fits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to
think of it; but that she loves him with an intraged
affection, it is past the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 27

Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. Bait the hook well, the fish will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord? she will fit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? you amaze me I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against *Benedick*.

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot sure hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th' infection, hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to *Benedick*?

Leon. No, and swears she never will, that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says: shall I, says she, that have so oft encounter'd him with scorn, write to him that I love him?

Leon. This says she now, when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a-night, and there will she sit in her smock, 'till she have writ a sheet of paper; my daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found *Benedick* and *Beatrice* between the sheet.

Claud. That.

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence, rail'd at her self, that she should be so modest, to write to one that she knew wou'd flout her: I measure him, says she, by my own spirit, for I should flout him if he writ to me, yea tho' I love him, I should.

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps,

28 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses;
O sweet *Benedick*! God give me patience!

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter says so, and the ecstasie hath so much overborn her, that my daughter is sometimes afraid she will do desperate outrage to her self; it is very true.

Pedro. It were good that *Benedick* knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? he would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

Pedro. If he should, it were an alms to hang him; she's an excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

Pedro. In every thing but in loving *Benedick*.

Leon. O my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one, that blood hath the victory; I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

Pedro. I would she had bestow'd this dotage on me; I would have doff't all other respects, and made her half my self; I pray you tell *Benedick* of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. *Hero* thinks surely she will die, for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known; and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

Pedro. She doth well; if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. 'Fore God, and in my mind very wise.

Pedro. He doth indeed shew some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Pedro. As *Hector*, I assure you; and in the managing of quarrels you may see he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them
with

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 29

with a christian-like fear.* Well, I am sorry for your niece: shall we go see *Benedick*, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord, let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.

Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love *Benedick* well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and that gentlewoman carry; the sport will be, when they hold an opinion of one another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see, which will be meerly a dumb shew; let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt.*]

Bene. This can be no trick, the conference was sadly born; they have the truth of this from *Hero*, they seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have the full bent. Love me! why it must be requited: I hear how I am censur'd; they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection—I did never think to marry—I must not seem proud—happy are they that hear their de-

*—————a christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, he must necessarily keep peace; if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Pedro. And so will he do, for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him, by some large jets he will make.

Well, &c.

B 3

30 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wise, but for loving me——by my troth it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for I will be horribly in love with her,——I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quipps and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? no: the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live 'till I were marry'd. Here comes *Beatrice*: by this day she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair *Beatrice*, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choak a daw withal: you have no stomach, Signior; fare you well. [*Exit.*]

Bene. Ha! against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: there's a double meaning in that. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me; that's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew; I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*]

A C T

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues in the Garden.

Enter Hero, Margaret *and* Ursula.

HERO.

GOOD *Margaret* run thee into the parlour,
 There shalt thou find my cousin *Beatrice*,
 Proposing with the prince and *Claudio*;
 Whisper her ear, and tell her I and *Ursula*
 Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
 Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us,
 And bid her steal into the pleas'd bower,
 ' Where honey-suckles ripen'd by the sun
 ' Forbid the sun to enter; like to favourites
 ' Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
 ' Against that power that bred it: there will she hide her,
 To listen to our purpose; this is thy office,
 Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come I warrant presently. [*Exit.*]

Hero. Now *Ursula*, when *Beatrice* doth come,
 As we do trace this alley up and down,
 Our talk must only be of *Benedick*;
 When I do name him, let it be thy part
 To praise him more than ever man did merit.
 My talk to thee must be how *Benedick*
 Is sick in love with *Beatrice*; of this matter
 Is little *Cupid's* crafty arrow made,
 That only wounds by hear-say: now begin.

Enter Beatrice.

For look where *Beatrice* like a lapwing runs
 Close by the ground to hear our conference.

Ursu. The pleasantest angling is to see the fish
 Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
 And greedily devour the treacherous bait;

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So angle we for *Beatrice*, who ev'n now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture ;
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.
No truly *Ursula* she's too disdainful,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As † haggerds of the rock.

Ursu. But are you sure
That *Benedick* loves *Beatrice* so intirely ?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.

Ursu. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam ?

Hero. They did intreat me to acquaint her of it ;
But I perswaded them, if they lov'd *Benedick*,
To with him wrestle with affection,
And never to let *Beatrice* know of it.

Ursu. Why did you so? doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever *Beatrice* shall couch upon ?

Hero. O God of love! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man:
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of *Beatrice*.
Dissdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Mis-prizing what they look on, and her wit
Values it self so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak ; she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

Ursu. Sure I think so ;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward ; ' if fair-fac'd,
' She'd swear the gentleman should be her sifter ;
' If black, why nature drawing of an antick,
' Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
' If low, an agat very vilely cut ;
' If speaking, why a vane blown with all winds ;

† *wild hawks.*

; If

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 33

‘ If silent, why a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Ursu. Sure, sure such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No, for to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As *Beatrice* is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so? if I should speak,
She’d mock me into air, O she would laugh me
Out of my self, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let *Benedick*, like covered fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly;
It were a bitter death to die with mocks,
Which is as bad as ’tis to die with tickling.

Ursu. Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

Hero. No, rather I will go to *Benedick*,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And truly I’ll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with; one doth not know
How much an ill word may impoison liking.

Ursu. O do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so sweet and excellent a wit,
As she is priz’d to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as *Benedick*.

Hero. He is the only man of *Italy*,
Always excepted my dear *Claudio*.

Ursu. I pray you be not angry with me, Madam,
Speaking my fancy; Signior *Benedick*,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremost in report through *Italy*.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

Ursu. His excellence did earn it ere he had it.
When are you married, Madam?

Hero. Why every day, to-morrow; come, go in.
I’ll shew thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Ursu. She’s ta’en, I warrant you; we have caught her,
Madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;

B 5

Some

34 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Some *Cupids* kill with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt.*

Beat. What fire is in my ears? can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt farewell, and maiden pride adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.

And *Benedick* love on, I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in an holy band.

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly.

[*Exit.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick and Leonato.

Pedro. I do but stay 'till your marriage be consummate, and then I go toward *Arragon*.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a foil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to shew a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with *Benedick* for his company, for from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut *Cupid's* bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as found as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he is in love.

Pedro. Hang him truant, there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love; if he be sad, he wants mony.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

Pedro. What? sigh for the tooth-ach!

Leon. Which is but a humour, or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud.

Claud. Yet say I he is in love.

Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a *Dutch* man to-day, a *French* man to-morrow. † Or in the shape of two countries at once, a *German* from the waist downward, all fops, and a *Spaniard* from the hip upward, no doublet: Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it to appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs; he brushes his hat a-mornings; what should that bode?

Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuf't tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did by the loss of a beard.

Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet, can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute-string, and now govern'd by stops----

Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despite of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth ach. Old Signior, walk aside with me, I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you which these hobby-horses must not hear.

* *Edit.* 1600.

Pedro.

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Pedro. For my life to break with him about *Beatrice*.

Claud. 'Tis even so. *Hero* and *Margaret* have by this play'd their parts with *Beatrice*, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John.

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private ?

John. If it please you; yet Count *Claudio* may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter ?

John. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow.
[To *Claudio*.

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment I pray you discover it.

John. You may think I love you not, let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest; for my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearneſs of heart hath help to effect your enſuing marriage; ſurely, ſuit ill ſpent, and labour ill beſtow'd.

Pedro. Why, what's the matter ?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumſtances ſhorten'd, (for ſhe hath been too long a talking of) the lady is diſloyal.

Claud. Who, *Hero* ?

John. Even ſhe, *Leonato's Hero*, your *Hero*, every man's *Hero*.

Claud. Diſloyal ?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedneſs; I could ſay ſhe were worſe; think you of a worſe title, and I will fit her to it: wonder not 'till further warrant; go but with me to-night, you ſhall ſee her chamber-window enter'd, even the night before her wedding-day; if you love her, then to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud.

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Claud. May this be so?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know; if you will follow me, I will shew you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly,

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation where I should, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no farther, 'till you are my witnesses; bear it coldly but 'till night, and let the issue shew itself.

Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

John. O plague right well prevented!

So will you say when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, *The Street.*

Enter Dogberry and Verges, with the watch.

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the Prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most disartless man to be constable?

1 Watch. *Hugh Oatecake*, Sir, or *George Seacoal*; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour *Seacoal*: God hath blest you with a good name; to be a well-favour'd man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2 Watch. Both which, master constable——

Dogb. You have; I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, Sir, why give God thanks,
and

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and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity: you are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch, therefore bear you the lanthorn; this is your charge; you shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man stand in the Prince's name.

2 Watch. How if he will not stand?

Dogb. Why then take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects: you shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk, is most tolerable, and not to be endur'd.

2 Watch. We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only have a care that your bills be not stolen: well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then let them alone 'till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

2 Watch. Well, Sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him by virtue of your office to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

2 Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd, the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him shew himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man,
partner.

Dogb.

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Dogb. Truly I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

2 Watch. How if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge: you, constable, are to present the Prince's own person, if you meet the Prince in the night you may stay him.

Verg. Nay bi'r lady, that I think he cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him; marry, not without the Prince be willing: for indeed the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. Bi'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! well, masters, good night; an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me; keep your fellow's counsel and your own, and good night; come neighbour.

2 Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge; let us go sit here upon the church-bench 'till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior *Leonato's* door, for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night; adieu; be vigilant I beseech you.

[*Exeunt Dogb. and Verg.*]

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bora. What, *Conrade*?

Watch. Peace, stir not.

[*Aside.*]

Bora. *Conrade*, I say.

Conr. Here man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mafs and my elbow itch'd, I thought there would a scab follow.

Conr. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bora.

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Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. Some treasons, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don *John* a thousand ducats.

Conr. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

Bora. Thou should'st rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich? for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conr. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shews thou art unconfirm'd, thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conr. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fashion.

Conr. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush, I may as well say the fool's the fool; but see'st thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know that *Deformed*; he has been a vile thief this seven years; he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear some body?

Conr. No, 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. See'st thou nor, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily he turns about all the hot-bloods between fourteen and five and thirty, sometimes fashioning them like *Pharaoh's* soldiers in the * *rechy* painting, sometimes like the God *Bell's* priests in the old church-window, sometimes like the shaven *Hercules* in the smirch'd worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club.

Conr. All this I see, and see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man; but art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither; but know that I have to-night wooed *Margaret*, the lady *Hero's* gentlewoman, by

* *rechy*, valuable,

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by the Name of *Hero*; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night——I tell this tale vildly——I should first tell thee how the Prince, *Claudio*, and my master planted and placed, and possessed by my master *Don John*, saw far off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Conr. And thought thy *Margaret* was *Hero*?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and *Claudio*; but the devil my master knew she was *Margaret*; and partly by his oaths which first possess them, partly by the dark night which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that *Don John* had made; away went *Claudio* enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there before the whole congregation shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 Watch. We charge you in the Prince's name stand.

2 Watch. Call up the right master constable, we have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the common-wealth.

1 Watch. And one *Deformed* is one of them; I know him, he wears a lock.

Conr. Masters, masters.

2 Watch. You'll be made bring *Deformed* forth, I warrant you.

Conr. Masters, never speak, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these mens bills.

Conr. A commodity in question I warrant you: come we'll obey you. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E, Leonato's House.

Enter *Hero*, *Margaret* and *Ursula*.

Hero. Good *Ursula*, wake my cousin *Beatrice*, and desire her to rise.

Ursu. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither,

Ursu.

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Ursu. Well.

Marg. Troth I think your other rebato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee good *Meg*, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth it's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion i'faith. I saw the Dutchess of *Milan's* gown that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth, it's but a night-gown in respect of yours; cloth of gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls, down-sleeves, side-sleeves and skirts, round, underborn with a blueish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say (saving your reverence) a husband. I bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend no body; is there any harm in the heavier for a husband? none I think, if it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise 'tis light and not heavy; ask my lady *Beatrice* else, here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet *Hero*.

Hero. Why how now? do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap us into *Light o' love*; that goes without a burden; do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yes light o' love with your heels; then if your husband have stables enough, you'll look he shall lack no barns.

Marg.

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Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five a clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready: by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, if you be not turn'd *Turk*, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I, but God send every one their heart's desire.

Hero. These gloves the Count sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuf, cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid and stuf! there's a goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long have you profest apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it; doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd *Carduus Benedictus*, and lay it to your heart, it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. *Benedictus*? why *Benedictus*? you have some moral in this *Benedictus*.

Marg. Moral? no by my troth, I have no moral meaning, I meant plain holy-thistle; you may think perchance that I think you are in love, nay, birlady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out with thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet *Benedick* was such another, and now is he become a man; he swore he would never marry, and yet now in despite of his heart he eats his meat without grudging; and how you may be converted.

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verted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Ursu. Madam withdraw; the Prince, the Count, Signior *Benedick*, Don *John*, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good *Meg*, good *Ursula*. [Exeunt.]

Enter Leonato, with Dogberry and Verges.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry Sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief I pray you, for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry this it is, Sir.

Verg. Yes in truth it is, Sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman *Verges*, Sir, speaks a little of the matter, an old man, Sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God help I would desire they were, but in faith as honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man and no honefter than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour *Verges*.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but truly for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a King, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha?

Dogb. Yea, and twice a thousand times more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and tho' I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry Sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's

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worship's presence, hath ta'en a couple as arrant knaves as any in *Messina*.

Dogb. A good old man, Sir, he will be talking as they say; when the age is in, the wit is out, God help us, it is a world to see: well said i' faith, neighbour *Verges*, well, he's a good man; an two men ride an horie, one must ride behind; an honest soul, i' faith Sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worship'd; all men are not alike, alas good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, Sir; our warch have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examin'd before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination your self, and bring it me, I am now in great haste as may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them. I am ready [*Ex. Leon.*]

Dogb. Go, good partner, go get you to *Francis Seacoal*, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail; we are now to examine those men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant; here's that shall drive some of them to non-come. Only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the Jail. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.
A CHURCH.

Enter D. Pedro, D. John, Leonato, Friar, Claudio,
Benedick, Hero, *and* Beatrice.

LEONATO.

COME, friar *Francis*, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be marry'd to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be marry'd to this Count.

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoin'd, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, *Hero*?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? why then some be of laughing, as ha, ha, he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar: father, by your leave, Will you with free and unconstrained soul, Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud.

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Claud. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness:

There *Leonato*, take her back again;
Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour;
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O what authority and shew of truth
Can cunning sin cover it self withal!
Comes not that blood, as modest evidence,
To witness simple virtue? would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shews? but she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my Lord?

Claud. Not to be marry'd,
Nor knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my Lord, if you in your own proof
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity——

Claud. I know what you would say: if I have known
her,

You'll say, she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forchand sin.

No, *Leonato*,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shew'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thy seeming, I will write against it;
You seem to me as *Dian* in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than *Venus*, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

Leon. Sweet Prince, why speak not you?

Pedro. What should I speak?

I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

John.

48 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. True! O God!

Claud. *Leonato*, stand I here?

Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?

Is this face *Hero's*? are our eyes our own?

Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my lord.

Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter,

And by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O God defend me, how am I beset!

What kind of catechizing call you this?

Leon. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not *Hero*? who can blot that name

With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry that can *Hero*;

Hero her self can blot out *Hero's* virtue.

What man was he talk'd with you yesternight

Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

Now if you are a maid answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my Lord;

Pedro. Why then you are no maiden, *Leonato*.

I am sorry you must hear; upon mine honour,

My self, my brother, and this grieved Count

Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night

Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window,

Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,

Confess'd the vile encounters they have had

A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my Lord,
Not to be spoken of;

There is not chastity enough in language,

Without offence, to utter them: thus, pretty lady,

I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O *Hero*! what a *Hero* hadst thou been,

If half thy outward graces had been plac'd

About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart?

But are thee well, most foul, most fair! farewel.

Thou

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 49

Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

Beat. Why how now, cousin, wherefore sink you
down?

John. Come, let us go; these things come thus to
light,

Smother her Spirits up.

[*Exeunt D. Pedro, D. John, and Claud.*]

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead I think; help, uncle.

Hero! why *Hero!* uncle! Signior *Benedict!* friar!

Leon. O fare! take not away thy heavy hand,
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin *Hero?*

Friar. Have comfort, Lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? why doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, *Hero*, do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
My self would on the reeward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
I've one too much by thee. Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had not I, with charitable hand,
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates?
Who smeered thus, and mir'd with infamy,
I might have said, no part of it is mine,
This shame derives itself from unknown loins:
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much,
That I my self was to my self not mine,

50 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Valuing of her; why she, O she is fall'n
 Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
 Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
 And salt too little which may season give
 To her foul tainted flesh.

Bene. Sir, Sir, be patient;
 For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
 I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul my cousin is bely'd.

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No truly, not; altho' until last night
 I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O that is stronger made
 Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
 Would the Prince lye? and *Claudio* would he lye,
 Who lov'd her so, that speaking of her foulness,
 Wash'd it with tears? hence from her, let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little,
 For I have only been silent so long,
 And given way unto this course of fortune,
 By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
 A thousand blushing apparitions
 To start into her face, a thousand innocent flames
 In angel whiteness bear away those blushes,
 And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire
 To burn the errors that these princes hold
 Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
 Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
 Which with experimental seal doth warrant
 The tenure of my book; trust not my age,
 My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
 If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here,
 Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be:
 Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left,
 Is, that she will not add to her damnation
 A sin of perjury, she not denies it:
 Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse,
 That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none:

If I know more of any man alive
 Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
 Let all my sins lack mercy. O my father,
 Prove you that any man with me convers'd
 At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
 Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
 Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the Princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
 And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
 The practice of it lives in *John* the bastard,
 Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leon. I know not: if they speak but truth of her,
 These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
 The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
 Time hath not yet so dry'd this blood of mine,
 Nor age so eat up my invention,
 Nor fortune made such havock of my means,
 Nor my bad life rest me so much of friends,
 But they shall find awak'd in such a kind,
 Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
 Ability in means, and choice of friends,
 To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause a while,
 And let my counsel sway you in this case.
 Your Daughter here the princess (left for dead)
 Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
 And publish it that she is dead indeed:
 Maintain a mourning ostentation,
 And on your family's old monument
 Hang mournful Epitaphs, and do all rites
 That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Friar. Marry, this well carry'd, shall on her behalf
 Change slander to remorse; that is some good:
 But not for that dream I on this strange course,
 But on this travel look for greater birth:
 She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
 Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
 Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,

52 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
 That what we have we prize not to the worth,
 While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
 Why then we rack the value, then we find
 The virtue that possession would not shew us
 Whilst it was ours; so will it fare with *Claudio*:
 • When he shall hear she dy'd upon his words,
 • Th'idea of her *love shall sweetly creep
 • Into his study of imagination,
 • And every lovely organ of her life
 • Shall come apparel'd in more precious habit;
 • More moving, delicate, and full of life,
 • Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 • Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn,
 If ever love had interest in his liver,
 And wish he had not so accused her;
 No, though he thought his accusation true:
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
 But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
 The supposition of the lady's death
 Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
 And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior *Leonato*, let the friar advise you:
 And though you know my inwardness and love
 Is very much unto the Prince and *Claudio*,
 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
 As secretly and justly, as your soul
 Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
 The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented, presently away,
 For to strange sores, strangely they strain the cure.
 Come, lady, die to live; this wedding-day
 Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and en-
 dure.

[*Exeunt.*
Manens

* *life.*

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 53

Manent Benedick and Beatrice.

Bene. Lady *Beatrice*, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah how much might the man deserve of me that would right her?

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you; is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not; it were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you; but believe me not; and yet I lye not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, *Beatrice*, thou lov'st me.]

Beat. Do not swear by it and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love you not.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devis'd to it; I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why then God forgive me.

Bene. What offence, sweet *Beatrice*?

Beat. You have stay'd me in a happy hour; I was about to protest I lov'd you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill *Claudio*.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny; farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet *Beatrice*.

Beat. I am gone, tho' I am here; there is no love in you; nay, I pray you let me go.

Bene. *Beatrice*.

54 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is *Claudio* thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain that hath slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman! O that I were a man! what bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with publick accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour—— O God that I were a man, I would eat his heart in the market place.

Bene. Hear me, *Beatrice*.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?——— a proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but *Beatrice*.

Beat. Sweet *Hero*! she is wrong'd, she is slander'd, she is undone.

Bene. But———

Beat. Princes and Counts! surely a princely testimony, a goodly count-comfect, a sweet gallant surely! O that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! but manhood is melted into curtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too; he is now as valiant as *Hercules*, that only tells a lye, and swears it; I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good *Beatrice*? by this hand I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count *Claudio* hath wrong'd *Hero*?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd, I will challenge him, I will kiss your hand, and so leave you; by this hand, *Claudio* shall render me dear account; as you hear of me, so think of me; go comfort your cousin, I must say she's dead, and so farewell.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 55

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Borachio, Conrade, the
Town-Clerk and Sexton in Gowns.

To. Cl. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Dog. O, a stool and cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Verg. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Dog. Nay, that's cerraïn, we have the exhibition to
examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be
examin'd? let them come before master constable.

To. Cl. Yea marry, let them come before me; what
is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

To. Cl. Pray write down, Borachio. Yours, Sirrah?

Conr. I am a gentleman, Sir, and my name is Con-
rade.

To. Cl. Write down master gentleman Conrade; masters, do you serve God? masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly; how answer you for your selves?

Conr. Marry, Sir, we say we are none.

To. Cl. A marvellous witty fellow I assure you, but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah, a word in your ear, Sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

To. Cl. Well, stand aside, 'fore God they are both in a tale: have you writ down that they are none?

Sexton. Master town-clerk, you go not the way to examine, you must call the watch that are their accusers.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, that's the easiest way, let the watch come forth; masters, I charge you in the prince's name accuse these men.

Enter Watchmen.

1 Watch. This man said, Sir, that Don John the prince's brother was a villain.

To. Cl. Write down, prince John a villain; why this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master town-clerk.

56 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

To. Cl. Pray thee fellow peace, I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 Watch. Marry, that he had receiv'd a thousand ducats of Don *John*, for accusing the lady *Hero* wrongfully.

To. Cl. Flat Burglary as ever was committed.

Dogb. Yea by th' Mafs that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 Watch. And that Count *Claudio* did mean, upon his words, to disgrace *Hero* before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

To. Cl. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince *John* is this morning secretly stoll'n away: *Hero* was in this manner accus'd, and in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly dy'd. Master constable, let these men be bound and brought to *Leonato*; I will go before, and shew him their examination.

Dogb. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Sexton. Let them be in the hands of *Coxcomb*. [*Exit.*

Dogb. God's my Life, where's the sexton? let him write down the Prince's officer *Coxcomb*: come, bind them, thou naughty varlet.

Conr. Away, you are an afs, you are an afs.

Dogb. Dolt thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an afs! but masters, remember that I am an afs, though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an afs; no, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness; I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer; and which is more, an householder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in *Messina*, and one that knows the law, go to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him; bring him away; O that I had been writ down an afs!

[*Exeunt.*

A C T

ACT V. SCENE I.

Before Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato and Antonio.

ANTONIO.

IF you go on thus, you will kill your self,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief,
Against your self.

Leo. I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve; give not me counsel,
Nor let no comfort else delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs doth fute with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain:
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape and form;
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And * hallow, wag, cry hem, when he should groan,
* Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
* With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,
* And I of him will gather patience.
* But there is no such man; for brother, men
* Can counsel, and give comfort to that grief
* Which they themselves not feel; but tasting it,
* Their counsel turns to passion, which before
* Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
* Fetter strong madness in a filken thread,
* Charm ach with air, and agony with words.
* No, no, 'tis all men's office, to speak patience
* To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
* But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
* To be so moral, when he shall endure

* *ferrow.*

C 5

* *The*

58 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

- The like himself; therefore give me no counsel,
- My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee peace; I will be flesh and blood;

- For there was never yet philosopher,
- That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
- However they have writ the style of Gods,
- And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon your self,
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason, nay I will do so.
My soul doth tell me *Hero* is bely'd,
And that shall *Claudio* know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio.

Ant. Here comes the Prince and *Claudio* hastily.

Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords?

Pedro. We have some haite, *Leonato*.

Leon. Some haite, my lord! well, fare you well,
my lord.

Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?

Leon. Marry thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler
thou.

Nay never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear;
In faith my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never flear and jest at me;
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag.
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old: know *Claudio*, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,

And

And with grey hairs and bruise of many days
Do challenge thee to tryal of a man;
I say, thou hast bely'd my innocent child,
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies bury'd with her ancestors,
O in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany!

Claud. My villany?

Leon. Thine *Claudio*, thine I say.

Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,

I'll prove it on his body if he dare;
Despight his nice fence and his active practice,
His *May* of youth and bloom of lustyhood.

Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so † daffe me? thou hast kill'd
my child;

If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed;

But that's no matter, let him kill one first;

Win me and wear me, let him answer me;

Come, follow me, boy, come boy, follow me,

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your ‡ foining fence;

Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother.

Ant. Content your self; God knows I lov'd my neice,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, miiktops!

Leon. Brother *Anthony*.

Ant. Hold you content; what, man? I know them,
yea,

And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-mongring boys,
That lye, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antickly, and show an outward hideousness,
And speak of half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies if they durst:
And this is all.

Leon.

† daffe, a country word for daunt.

‡ foining, pushing, or making a pass in fencing.

60 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Leon. But brother *Anthony*.

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your pa-
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death; [tience.
But on my honour she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord——

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No! come brother away, I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exe. ambo.*

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now Signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

Pedro. Welcome Signior; you are almost come to
part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses
snapt off with two old men without teeth.

Pedro. *Leonato* and his brother; what think'st thou?
had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young
for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour: I
came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee,
for we are high proof melancholly, and would fain
have it beaten away: wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

Pedro. Doit thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have
been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do
the minstrels; draw to pleasure us.

Pedro. As I am an honest man he looks pale: art
thou sick or angry?

Claud. What! courage man: what tho' care kill'd
a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, if you
charge it against me. I pray you chuse another subject.

Claud. Nay, then give him another staff, this last
was broke cross.

Pedro.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 61

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God blefs me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a Villain; I jest not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardise. You have kil'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feast?

Claud. I' faith I thank him, he hath bid me to a calves-head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

Pedro. I'll tell thee how *Beatrice* prais'd thy wit the other day: I said thou hadst a fine wit; right, says she, a fine little one; no, said I, a great wit; just, said she, a great gross one; nay said I, a good wit; just, said she, it hurts no body; nay said I, the gentleman is wise; certain, said she, a wise gentleman; nay said I, he hath the tongues; that I believe, said she, for he swore a thing to me on *Monday* night which he forswore on *Tuesday* morning; there's a double tongue, there's two tongues. Thus did she an hour together transshape thy particular virtues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in *Italy*.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said she car'd not.

Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly; the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all; and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

Pedro. But when shall we set the salvage bull's horns on the sensible *Benedick's* head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, here dwells *Benedick* the married man.

Bene.

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Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind, I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour; you break jests as braggards do their blades, which God be thank'd hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you; I must discontinue your company; your brother the bastard is fled from *Messina*; you have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord lack-beard there, he and I shall meet, and 'till then peace be with him. [Exit Benedick.]

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest, and I'll warrant you for the love of *Beatrice*.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Conrade and Borachio guarded.

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape, but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

Pedro. But soft you, let me see, pluck up my heart and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled?

Dogb. Come you, Sir, if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance; nay, if you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be lock'd to.

Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound? *Borachio* one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, Sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths; secondarily they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have bely'd a lady; thirdly, they have verifly'd unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reason'd, and in his own division; and by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

Pedro.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 63

Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this Count kill me: I have deceiv'd even your very eyes; what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man; how Don *John* your brother incens'd me to slander the lady *Hero*, how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court *Margaret* in *Hero's* garments, how you disgrac'd her when you should marry her; my villany they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame; the Lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison while he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery,
And fled he is upon this villany.

Claud. Sweet *Hero!* now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come bring away the plaintiffs, by this time our texton hath reform'd Signior *Leonato* of the matter; and masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior *Leonato*, and the texton too.

Enter Leonato.

Leon. Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him; which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou, art thou the slave that with thy
breath
Has kill'd mine innocent child?

Bora.

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Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so villain, thou bely'st thy self;
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thank you princes for my daughter's death;
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak: chuse your revenge your self,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin; yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

Pedro. By my soul nor I;
And yet to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. You cannot bid my daughter live again,
That were impossible; but I pray you both
Possess the People in *Messina* here
How innocent she dy'd; and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night:
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew; my brother hath a daughter
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us,
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble Sir!
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me:
I do embrace your offer, and dispose
For henceforth of poor *Claudio*.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming,
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to *Margaret*,
Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul she was not;
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me.

But

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 65

But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, Sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me *afs*; I beseech you let it be remembered in his punishment; and also the watch heard them talk of one *Deformed*: they say he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath us'd so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation.

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner; and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an errant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct your self, for the example of others. God keep your worship; I wish your worship well: God restore you to health; I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, God prohibit it. Come neighbour.

[*Exeunt.*]

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, Lords farewell.

Ant. Farewel my Lords, we look for you to-morrow.

Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with *Hero*.

Leon. Bring you these fellows on, we'll talk with
Margaret,

How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Leonato's House.*

Enter Benedick and Margaret.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress *Margaret*, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of *Beatrice*.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?
Bene.

66 MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING.

Bene. In so high a style, *Margaret*, that no man living shall come over it; for in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, *Margaret*, it will not hurt a woman; and so I pray thee call *Beatrice*: I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, *Margaret*, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call *Beatrice* to you, who I think hath legs. [Exit Margaret.]

Bene. And therefore will come. [*Sings*] *The God of love that sits above, and knows me, and knows me, how pitiful I deserve, I mean in singing; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why they were never so truly turn'd over and over, as my poor self in love; marry I cannot shew it in rhyme; I have try'd, I can find out no rhyme to lady but bady, an innocent's rhyme; for scorn, born, a hard rhyme; for school, fool, a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings; no, I was not born under a rhiming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms.*

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet *Beatrice*, would'st thou come when I call thee?

Beat. Yea Signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O stay but till then.

Beat. Then is spoken; fare you well now; and yet ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath past between you and *Claudio*.

Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee. *Beat.*

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Beat. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unknifs'd.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of its right sense, so forcible is thy wit; but I must tell thee plainly, *Claudio* undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward: and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politick a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love! a good epithet; I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spight of your heart, I think; alas poor heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession; there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, *Beatrice*, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours; if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monuments, than the bells ring, and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question? why an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum; therefore it is most expedient for the wife, if Don worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to my self; so much for praising my self; who I my self will bear witness is praise-worthy; and now tell me how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Enter Ursula.

Bene. Serve God, love me and mend; there will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Ursu.

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Ursu. Madam, you must come to your uncle; yonders's old coil at home; it is prov'd my Lady *Hero* hath been falsely accus'd, the Prince and *Claudio* mightily abus'd, and Don *John* is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be bury'd in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, a CHURCH.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and Attendants with tapers.

Claud. Is this the monument of *Leonato*?

Atten. It is, my lord.

EPI T A P H.

*Done to death by slanderous tongues,
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that dy'd with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.*

Claud. Now musick sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

S O N G.

*Pardon, Goddess of the night,
Those that slew the virgin knight;
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight assist our moan,
Help us to sigh and groan.
Heavily, heavily,
Graves yawn and yield your dead,
'Till death be uttered,
Heavenly, heavenly.*

Claud.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 69

Claud. Now unto thy bones good night ;
Yearly will I do this rite.

Pedro. Good morrow masters, put your torches out,
The wolves have prey'd ; and look the gentle day
Before the wheels of *Phæbus*, round about
Dapples the drowsie east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us ; fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow masters ; each his several way.

Pedro. Come let us hence, and put on other weeds,
And then to *Leonato's* we will go.

Claud. And *Hymen* now with luckier issue speeds
Than this, for whom we render'd up this woe. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Leonato's House.*

*Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret, Ursula, Antonio,
Friar, and Hero.*

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent ?

Leon. So are the Prince and *Claudio* who accus'd her,
Upon the error that you heard debated.

But *Margaret* was in some fault for this ;
Although against her will as it appears,
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call youg *Claudio* to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by your selves,
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd :
The Prince and *Claudio* promis'd by this hour
To visit me ; you know your office, brother,
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to youg *Claudio*.

[*Exeunt Ladies.*]

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must intreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, Signior ?

Bene. To bind me or undo me, one of them :
Signior *Leonato*, truth it is good Signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Ant. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.

Bene.

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Bene. And I do with an Eye of Love requite her.

Leon. The Sight whereof I think you had from me,
From *Claudio* and the Prince; but what's your will?

Bene. Your Answer, Sir, is enigmatical;
But for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
I'th' state of honourable Marriage,
Inwhich, good Friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio, with Attendants.

Pedro. Good morrow to this fair Assembly.

Leon. Good morrow Prince, good morrow *Claudio*,
We here attend you; are you yet determin'd
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an *Ethiops*.

Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the Friar ready.

Pedro. Good morrow, *Benedick*; why what's the
matter,

That you have such a *February* face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull:
Tush, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And so all *Europe* shall rejoice at thee,
As once *Europa* did at lusty *Jove*,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull *Jove*, Sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Enter Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula.

Claud. For this I owe you; here come other reckonings.

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Leon. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why then she's mine; sweet, let me see your
face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, 'till you take her hand
Before this Friar, and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand; before this holy Friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero.

MUCH ADO *about* NOTHING. 71

Hero. And when I liv'd I was your other Wife.

[*Unmasking.*

And when you lov'd you were my other husband.

Claud. Another *Hero*?

Hero. Nothing certainer.

One *Hero* dy'd, but I do live;

And surely as I live I am a maid.

Pedro. The former *Hero*! *Hero* that is dead!

Leon. She dy'd, my lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.

Friar. All this Amazement can I qualify.

When after that the holy rites are ended,

I'll tell thee largely of fair *Hero's* death:

Mean time let wonder seem familiar,

And to the chappel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is *Beatrice*?

Beat. I answer to that name, what is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why no; no more than reason.

Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince, and *Claudio*, have been deceiv'd, they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth no, no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, *Margaret*, and *Ursula*, are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no matter, then you do not love me?

Beat. No truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her,
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to *Beatrice*.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto *Benedick*.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts; come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pity.

Beat.

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Beat. I would not deny you, but by this good day I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life; for as I was told, you were in a consumption.

Leon. Peace, I will stop your mouth.

Pedro. How dost thou, *Benedick* the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, Prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: dost thou think I care for a satyr, or an epigram? no: if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me, for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion; for thy part, *Claudio*, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied *Beatrice*, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends; let's have a dance e'er we are marry'd, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play musick. Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife; there is no staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My Lord, your brother *John* is ta'en in flight, And brought with armed men back to *Messina*.

Bene. Think not on him 'till to-morrow, I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up pipers.

[*Dance.*

[*Exeunt omnes.*

F I N I S.